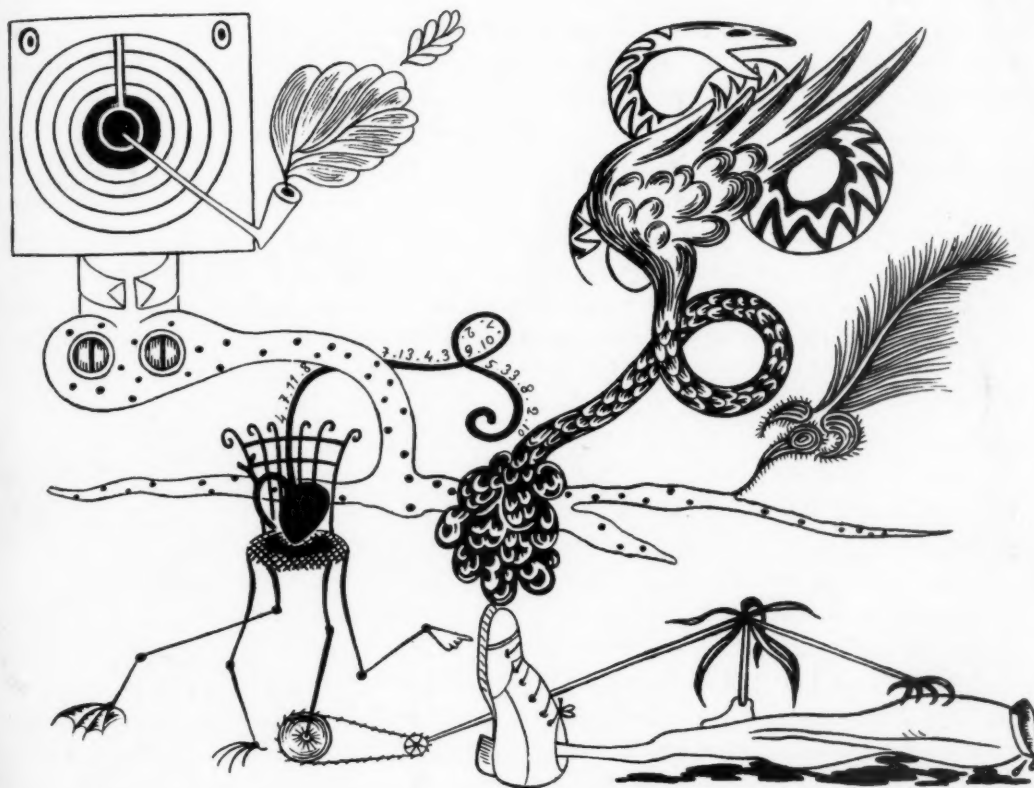


DEC 17 1936

MFA

The Bulletin of The Museum of Modern Art



Landscape, a Surrealist composite drawing or "exquisite corpse" by André Breton, Tristan Tzara, Valentine Hugo, Greta Knutsen. Lent by Tristan Tzara to the Museum's exhibition of Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism.

Dada and Surrealism

Essays by Georges Hugnet

-3

Volume 4

November - December 1936

RCN
New

In presenting its exhibition *FANTASTIC ART, DADA AND SURREALISM*, the Museum of Modern Art offers material for the study of one of the important and conspicuous movements of modern art. In so doing, the Museum does not intend to set its stamp of approval upon a particular aspect of modern art any more than it did when it presented last year its retrospective exhibition of Cubism and Abstract Art. In a similar spirit it publishes these essays by Georges Hugnet on Dada and Surrealism. They were originally commissioned for the catalog of the exhibition but arrived too late for inclusion.

Of all the Surrealist writers it is M. Hugnet who has shown himself most interested in an historical approach. He was not old enough to take part in the Dada movement so that his account of its activities and ideas, which are now some twenty years old, is comparatively detached and retrospective. Of Surrealism he writes more as an active participant and apologist.

There is much about Surrealism and its predecessor, Dada, that may seem wantonly outrageous and iconoclastic; in fact, these movements in advocating anti-rational values seem almost to have declared war on the conventions and standards of established Society. But it may be remembered that the Dadaists and Surrealists hold Society responsible for the Great War, the Treaty of Versailles, post-war inflation, rearmament, and a variety of social, political and economic follies which have made the realities of Christendom in their eyes a spectacle of madness just as shocking as their most outrageous super-realities may be to the outside world.

Georges Hugnet was born in Paris, July 11, 1906. He is represented in the Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., Surrealist Collection recently presented to the Museum's Library by the following volumes of poetry and drama: *Le droit de Varech*, précédé par *Le muet*, ou *Les secrets de la vie*, Paris, Editions de la Montagne, 1930; *Ombres portées*, Paris, Editions de la Montagne, 1932; *Enfances*, Paris, Editions Cahiers d'Art, 1933; *La belle en dormant*, Paris, Editions des Cahiers Libres, 1933. He also edited and wrote a long introduction to *Petite Anthologie poétique du Surréalisme*, Paris, Editions Jeanne Bucher, 1934. His "*L'Esprit dada dans la peinture*," an important series of essays, appeared in *Cahiers d'Art*, 1932, Nos. 1-2, 6-7, 8-10, and 1934, No. 1-4. M. Hugnet's most recent work is an album of "cut-out poems," *La septième face du dé*, Paris, Editions Jeanne Bucher, 1936.

M. Hugnet's essays have been translated by Miss Margaret Scolari.

A. H. B., Jr.

References in M. Hugnet's essays to the work of various artists give the numbers under which the items in question can be found in the Museum's catalog, *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism*; numbers with an asterisk, e.g., No. *349, refer to items illustrated in that catalog.

Reference is made to the catalog *Cubism and Abstract Art*, 1936, for illustration of further items.

Books and periodicals marked by a dagger† are to be found in the Museum's Library.

Films marked with a double dagger‡ are in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.

Dada

by Georges Hugnet

Just two years before the War there appeared symptoms of a certain disregard of those rules which automatically accompany all forms of art no matter how novel. Cubism, marvellous in certain aspects, and yet already so unartistic and unpoetic, was, under the leadership of certain wastrels, drifting towards an odious estheticism. Futurism, noisy and attractive in some of its aims, added to the confusion.

With the advent of the War and in its atmosphere of breakdown, Dada was born. It subverted all values and made a clean sweep of everything. It was in a given place and at a precise date that *Dada* acquired a name and legal status, but its attitude of revolt, its desire for escape, its thirst for destruction existed already in various men and in various places: first in New York, then in Zurich, Berlin, Cologne, Paris, Hanover.

Dada is ageless, it has no parents, but stands alone, making no distinction between what is and what is not. It approves while denying, it contradicts itself, and acquires new force by this very contradiction. Its frontal attack is that of a traitor stealing up from behind. It undermines established authority. It turns against itself, it indulges in self-destruction, it sees red, its despair is its genius. There is no hope, all values are levelled to a universal monotony, there is no longer a difference between good and evil—there is only an awareness. Dada is a taking stock, and as such it is as irreparable as it is ridiculous. It knows only itself.

Dada has a history only because we are willing to believe it, because it has clapped on a hat and a celluloid collar and has sat down beside us unknown, misunderstood

and yet greeted by us from the beginning of the world as an inseparable companion.

No one has a right to ignore DADA.

It happened: just as if one day the Bébé Cadum had come down from its poster to sit beside you in the 'bus. Tristan Tzara gave a name to this delicious malaise: DADA. Dada was born from what it hated. At first it was commonly thought to be an artistic and literary movement or a *mal du siècle*. But Dada was the sickness of the world.

1. Zurich

In Zurich in 1916 Hugo Ball founded a literary nightclub: the *Cabaret Voltaire*. Here Dada manifests itself in such confusion that it's hard to tell it apart from its enemy, Art, and, indeed, it embarks on an evolution not unlike that of Cubism and Futurism. But Dada draws advantage from the confusion and profits from the fermentation of the neutral city, which harbors refugees, anarchists and revolutionaries. Those who seek safety in Zurich are not conscious of what's going on in their midst, they are ignorant of the force that right among them is gaining consistency and is about to explode.

Arp, van Rees and Mme. van Rees, who had exhibited together in 1915, hung their works on the walls of the *Cabaret Voltaire* together with those of Picasso, Eggeling, Segal, Janco, Marinetti. On February 8th, 1916, with the help of a paper-knife slipped at random into a dictionary a name was found for the new state of mind—DADA. Thanks to Richard Huelsenbeck, a German just in from Berlin, a celebration was organized. Dada, from then on, has but one aim, to be subversive and, like Cubism,

Futurism, negro music, exasperating to the public.

But Dada is neither modern nor modernistic, it is immediate.

The first Dada publication is printed by the Heuberger press and is given the name *Cabaret Voltaire*. It brings together Apollinaire, Picasso, Modigliani, Arp, Tzara, van Hoddiss, Huelsenbeck, Kandinsky, Marinetti, Cangiullo, van Rees, Slodky, Ball, Hennings, Janco, Cendrars. The series of Dada publications continues with two books: *La première aventure céleste de M. Antipyrine* [the first heavenly adventure of Mr. Fire-extinguisher] by Tristan Tzara illustrated by Janco—and *phantastische gebete* [fantastic prayers] by Richard Huelsenbeck with woodcuts by Hans Arp. Two numbers of a periodical directed by Tristan Tzara, *Dada* 1† and *Dada* 2† appear in 1917. Despite certain symptoms of incipient orderliness they persist in a confusion which serves to make Dada increasingly conscious of itself as the only absolute in a world where values, feelings and sincerity are relative. Dada utilizes for its own ends what has been done already and then turns against it threateningly.

Although when Dada first began in Zurich, the manifestations organized by poets were the most characteristic and the most effective, we are here concerned with Dada painting. Dada painting fought Cubism, Futurism and Expressionism alike; it demanded total abstraction or, at least, absolute purity of construction. Eggeling wanted to utilize moving pictures, but in the service of abstraction. Yet, it was not until after the appearance of Duchamp's works, after the coming of Picabia, after the exhibitions in Cologne and Hanover of Arp, Max Ernst, Baargeld and Kurt Schwitters, that Dada painting, indepen-

dent at last, came to reinforce Tzara's work of destruction and systematic demoralization. (For Eggeling see *Cubism and Abstract Art*, plate 182.)

The Dada activities in Zurich from 1916 to 1918 shook off their literary character and directly attacked the conventions and stale sensibility of a public which in the face of such effrontery wavered between rage and amazement. On the stage of the cabaret keys were jangled till the audience protested and went crazy. Serner instead of reciting his poems placed a bunch of flowers at the feet of a dressmaker's mannequin. Some marionettes and some masks of Sophie Täuber-Arp, curious objects in painted cardboard, recited the poems of Arp. Huelsenbeck screamed his verses louder and louder while Tzara followed the same crescendo on a kettle drum. For hours on end they went through gymnastic exercises which they called *noir cacadou*. Tzara invented chemical and static poems. Static poems were made by rearranging chairs upon which posters, each with a word, had been placed. For these performances Janco designed paper costumes of every color, put together with pins and above all spontaneous. Perishable, purposely ugly and absurd, these materials, chosen by the hazard of eye and mind symbolized in showy rags the perpetual revolt, the despair which refuses to let itself despair. (cf. Janco, No. 400; Täuber-Arp, Nos. 511, *512).

Dada spread like a spot of oil. New names kept cropping up—Picabia, Reverdy, Birot, Dermée, Soupault, Huidobro, Savinio. For the *Anthologie dada*† (*Dada* Nos. 4 and 5) Arp devised a singular cover, important because it marks a sharp separation between Dada and modernism. This breach, soon to be accentuated by Picabia, was ultimately made total by the Dada

spirit of Berlin, Hanover, Cologne, represented by Grosz, Heartfield, Schwitters, Baargeld, Max Ernst, and Arp. One might nearly say, despite the spirit of disorder which distinguishes it, that the cover of *Dada* 4-5[†] was to Cubism what the words drawn from a hat by Tristan Tzara were to the poetry of the early XX century. In Picasso's *papiers collés* and his cardboard objects, in the extraneous textures introduced into his paintings as early as 1912 (newspaper, imitation wood and marble) the materials used are still lyrical elements not detached from reality. With Arp, on the other hand, and even more with Ernst, newspaper, wallpaper, photographs, and vignettes, picked up at random, taken ready-made and unaltered from their normal context and redistributed easily and blindly, integrate what was borrowed in a recreation of the object and transpose its superficial reality into a superior reality. In 1920 in Cologne Ernst's own collages* as well as those resulting from his collaboration with Arp will achieve their intensity under the coverall name of *Fatagaga (fabrication de tableaux garantis gazométriques)* (cf. Ernst, No. 330).

If one excepts certain collages, Arp's most significant works of this time, inasmuch as they embark upon an active destruction in the Dada spirit, are his illustrations for two works of Tzara: *25 poèmes*[†] and *Calendrier cinéma du coeur abstrait*.[†] These illustrations are much freer than those for Richard Huelsenbeck's book, which were rigid, formal, aiming at purity of forms. For Arp abstract art was the main preoccupation as evidenced by

his persistent intent not to imitate nature. He was thus separated to an extent from Tzara and Huelsenbeck, partisans of systematic disorder and of that total confusion of the arts by which they were finally to be annihilated. Nevertheless, we must note here certain experiments undertaken by Arp, all the more important inasmuch as they harmonize with experiments which were later to play an important rôle in the exploration of the unconscious. Arp traced on paper every morning the same drawing and thus obtained, whether inspired or not, a series of drawings, the variations of which were practically automatic. He also trusted to the laws of chance when he cut out with deliberate absentmindedness pieces of paper colored on one side, placed them, colored face down, on a piece of cardboard, shook them, shuffled them, strewed them around, and finally turned them over and pasted them on a cardboard, preserving the pattern of shapes and the arrangement of colors which he had obtained by chance (cf. Arp, Nos. *264, *265, *267).

In 1919 in Zurich a nucleus of painters of disparate tendencies united under the name of *Association des artistes révolutionnaires* upon the instigation of Hans Richter, a former member of the German expressionist group *Die Aktion*, which already during the War had established the principle that the artist must take an active part in politics (at that time they were to oppose the War and support the Revolution). When revolution broke out in Munich and Budapest the *Association*, fearing that the artists would be ignored, tried to involve in the revolution the more

*"Collage," the French word meaning a "pasting," has now become a generally accepted international term for pictures composed partially or entirely of pasted pieces of paper, etc., often with a bizarre

or incongruous effect. The term *papier collé* is usually confined to Cubist works of 1912-14 and similar compositions in which a formal rather than a Dada or Surrealist interest predominates. Ed.

esthetically revolutionary painters. Certain of the Dadaists saw fit to take part in this movement, which lasted only a few weeks, but enlisted the participation of Richter, Eggeling, Segal, Janco, Arp, Helbig and Baumeister. It was taken up shortly afterwards by the Russian painters under the name of *Constructivism** and resulted in a decorative art of limited interest (Lissitzky, Tatlin, Malevich, Gabo, Pevsner). Doubtless the Zurich Association realized soon enough that the radical methods of Dada, represented by Serener and Tzara, were more efficacious even from a revolutionary point of view. Be that as it may, it should be remarked that abstract art proved inactive and sterile. It was one of the weaknesses of Dada's beginning.

2. New York

In New York at the same time and even somewhat earlier Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia and Man Ray were accomplishing a revolution of the same type. They gave no name to the movement they were creating and of which they were half unaware. They didn't care much really. For various reasons, mainly their proud detachment, they figure as pre-Dadaists, as authentic Dadaists. When they discover Dada it is really Dada that discovers them.

Marcel Duchamp, a painter first influenced by Cézanne, then by Cubism, began as early as 1913 to feel bored with the new estheticism, the new attitude of pictorial formalism which already had been swallowed whole as an artistic dogma. Even in 1911 and 1912 Marcel Duchamp, turning from Cubism, painted the *Nude descending the stairs* and the *Sad young man in*

the train, both of which show interests other than those of stylization and beauty of forms. *The bride, The King and Queen traversed by swift nudes* and the *Chocolate grinder* were painted in Munich and Paris in 1912-1913; the synchronized movements contrast with the static elements, and the machine style, instead of adorning itself with futurist estheticism, serves to transform nudes or figures (cf. Duchamp, Nos. *216, *217, *218; also *Cubism and Abstract Art*, plate 40).

It is at this epoch that Duchamp, doubtless exasperated by the turn that painting was taking, selected a series of objects which he called "ready-made," amongst them a rotating bottle drier, 1914, and a bicycle wheel, both of which he signed. In the first New York Independents' exhibition, 1917, he entered a porcelain toilet accessory with the title *Fontaine* and signed it R. Mutt in order to test the impartiality of the jury of which he was himself a member. By this symbol Duchamp wished to signify his disgust for art and his complete admiration for ready-made objects. But R. Mutt's entry was thrown out of the show after a few hours' debate and Duchamp, making the issue a question of principle, tendered his resignation. Later he sent a snow shovel, a typewriter cover and a hat-rack to an exhibition at the Bourgeois galleries, where Matisse and Picasso were being shown. Ready-made objects were thus consecrated and put on the same footing as masterpieces (cf. Duchamp, No. *221).

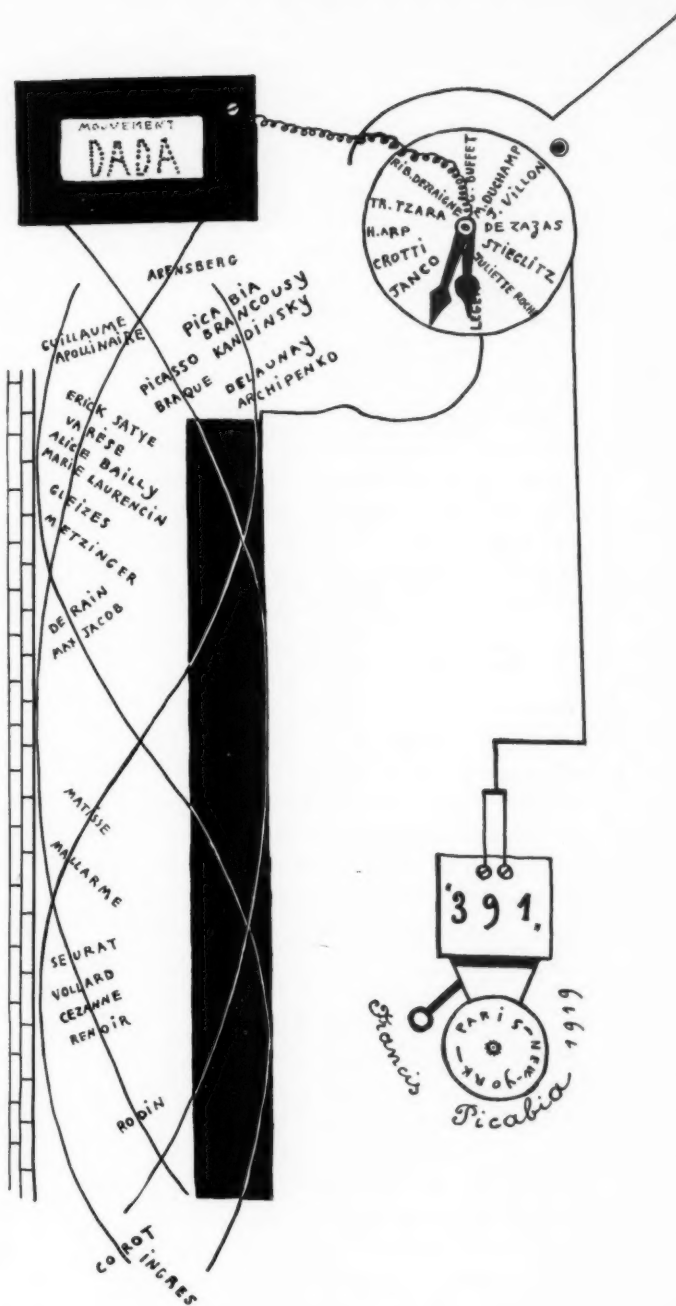
Around 1920 Duchamp was making objects of painted glass, starred with cracks, and sumptuous toys endowed with movement. One of these, spun by a motor, near-

*The Russian movement, called Constructivism in 1920, began about 1914 and was, like Dada, under the joint influence of Futurism and Cubism. Malevich, the Suprematist, passed through a proto-

Dada phase in 1914 as is proven by the *Private of the First Division*, No. 564, a collage with postage stamp, thermometer, etc. (see also *Cubism and Abstract Art*, plate 111-139.) Ed.

ly decapitated Man Ray. Duchamp was also working on an immense glass pane, *The bride*, which can be said to recapitulate his work, limited in quantity but concentrated, compact, of capital importance. Out of disdain and a kind of haughty detachment he stopped producing works of art about 1923 and devoted himself to chess. In New York Duchamp published two periodicals which had three issues in all: *The blind man* and *Wrong-wrong*, 1917. These reviews together with 291, Picabia's New York publication, give the measure of the peculiar negativistic spirit, detached and humorous, which was to leave a deep mark on the period (cf. Duchamp, Nos. *220, 222; also *Cubism and Abstract Art*, plate 193).

Before speaking of Picabia's departure in 1917, it is important to consider the work of Man Ray in New York, for Man Ray became the principal American participant in the Dada movement and belongs today to the Surrealist group. In 1916 and '17 Man Ray constructed objects containing elements extraneous to painting, objects of everyday use. This effort was parallel to that of Duchamp. Man Ray paints the elements of a world that really belongs to him, of a world where reality has the ineluctability of a dream. Interested in photography, he exploits its every possibility and follows the lead of accidents and chance discoveries. (He experiments, but Man Ray objects to any of his work being called experimental, everything is a completed achievement.) Without the aid of



The Dada Movement, by Francis Picabia, published in *Anthologie Dada* (Dada 4-5) and lent by the editor, Tristan Tzara, to the exhibition of *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism*.

a camera he devises strange photographic images which he calls "rayographs," 1921 (cf. Ray, Nos. 467-469, *470, 471-*474).

Thanks to Duchamp and Man Ray the mechanically made and everyday object enters the realm of painting and sculpture with all the honors due to its rank. Monstrous toys are constructed, amusing and murderous, no longer made to hang on a wall but to penetrate everyday life. In Duchamp's house, when impelled by boredom or despair, one could push with one's thumb the wheel of a bicycle, throw into action the antennae of an object which described the curves of a spiral—a game for the eye, strictly and insanely mathematical. One could also catch one's foot and kill oneself on a clothes hanger nailed to the floor. Duchamp opens the era of poetic experience where casual, concrete things are the poetry you take in your hand. In 1913, in Paris he had painted three pictures entitled *Trois stoppages étalon* (three standard stops) which attempted to give a new appearance to the measure of a meter. This is how they were done: Duchamp took three threads, each a meter long, which he dropped from the height of a meter one after the other on to three blank canvases. Scrupulously he traced the contours of the threads with a thin trickle of varnish—a purely accidental design (cf. Duchamp, Nos. 222, 223, *224; Ray, No. *476).

In different ways Duchamp, Picabia, Man Ray, were haunted by the laws of chance while elsewhere at the same time, though in mutual ignorance, other men were similarly haunted. The latter found a name for the state of mind which was to blaze a new trail and take possession of the world to give it a new basis and a new conscience. *Dada* puts the world with its back to the wall.

In 1917, after having left New York, Picabia published in Barcelona several issues of a review entitled *391*† in memory of his *291* in New York.

His illustrations are sensational. His drawing *Novia* for the cover of the first number represents parts of an engine. Later he contributes to *Dada*† a drawing made by dipping cogwheels in ink and applying them to paper. It was out of a kind of anarchical sense of humor that Picabia undertook his work of demoralization both in his publications and in his exhibitions. His mechanical drawings mingled with inscriptions are meant to revolt the art-lover. Bored no less by Cubist stylization than by Futurism (that peculiar brand of Impressionism produced by the cult of the machine) Picabia sublimates the machine-made object and recreates it outside its original purpose according to the laws of chance very much as had Duchamp, who constantly insisted upon *not* creating works of art and who towers in his magnificent detachment over the entire epoch (cf. Picabia, Nos. 460, *461).

As early as 1913 Picabia had abandoned the new forms assumed by painting as is proven by his work of the "orphic" period such as *Udnie jeune fille americaine*. This painting is conceived according to an anti-static pictorial theory whereby the movement of time and memory is transposed into color (cf. Picabia No. *459).

In Zurich Picabia, feeling himself at ease and appreciated by those around him, contributed a great deal to the moral importance of the Dada movement; he helped to exteriorize it, to establish its power and its dictatorship. His pictorial and poetic activity, his very personal spirit of negation made him at this period a figure of primary importance to the development of Dada.

3. Berlin

Wherever it spreads Dada takes on a different color. In Berlin it is above all political. Richard Huelsenbeck, who had been made Commissioner for Fine Arts during the German Revolution, gathers a group of intellectuals under the banner of Dada. In the wake of some preparatory articles, a lecture, a manifesto signed by the Berlin group and by the Zurich Dadaists, the periodicals *Club Dada*, *der dada* (1918) make their appearance. We find in them the names of Raoul Hausmann, Richard Huelsenbeck, George Grosz, F. Jung, Johannes Baader, Heartfield, Walter Mehring, Gerhard Preiss, Tristan Tzara, Francis Picabia and others. The works of Duchamp, Charlie Chaplin, Erik Satie are discussed. The typography, by Raoul Hausmann, as untidy and arbitrary as it was in Zurich, is enriched with dishevelled layouts in which vignettes, Hebrew characters and ink-blots are scattered at random. The illustrations consist of collages of newspapers, photographs, photomontages composed without much seriousness by Hausmann and Heartfield. One senses an effort to be daring, outrageous, and at the same time entertaining and funny in the humorous exploitation of current anecdote. The drawings and deformed photographs of Grosz contribute an aspect of caricature, sometimes ferocious, nevertheless curious rather than new. The field of the plastic arts is not restricted to the painters: handmade poetry belongs to all (cf. Hausmann, No. *383; Grosz, Nos. 380, *381, *382; Baader, No. *289).

This confusion of genres, of techniques and media, and the systematic exploration of every possibility for purposes of plastic representation are one of the characteristics of Dada.

In Berlin as elsewhere we notice the persistent desire to destroy art, the deliberate intent to wipe out existing notions of beauty, the insistence upon the greatest possible obliteration of individuality. Heartfield works under the direction of Grosz while Max Ernst and Arp sign each other's paintings at random. Dada rejects narrow individualism, it is a communal activity. *Der dada* gives publicity to the other Dada magazines: *Dada* and *Der Zeltweg* of Zurich; *Die Schamade*† of Cologne; *DADAPHONE*,† *Proverbe*,† 391,† and *Cannibale*† of Paris, all of which are active at approximately the same time.

Berlin Dada takes on an increasingly revolutionary character. It inclines more sharply towards Communism. A continuous preoccupation with actuality, an instantaneous and ruthless revolutionary expression, a negation of artistic values together with caricatures of a popular nature combine to make the Berlin Dada movement sterile when compared to the exhilarating aspects of the movements of Zurich, Cologne, and Paris, all of which functioned more completely under the sign of the marvellous, under the lyrical fulguration of Dada.

After various activities, some individual, some communal, after the spreading of propaganda, the disseminating of prospectuses, the organizing of lecture tours, the opening of a Dada nightclub, Dada in 1920 reached its zenith in Berlin and in the same year its decline and fall. The most important pictorial manifestation of Dada in Berlin took place in that year and consisted of an exhibition of 174 items. The catalog† establishes and clarifies the position of Dada by many prefaces and statements and confirms the aims of the struggle already undertaken. It is repeated that "Dada is political" and all should be

sacrificed to the present and the immediate; contemporary allusions, now outdated, escape the reader and some of the works now seem incomprehensible.

The Berlin Dadaists invited to their great 1920 exhibition almost all those who, to their knowledge, participated in Dada both in Germany and abroad: Baargeld and Max Ernst (Cologne), Rudolph Schlichte (Karlsruhe), W. Stuckenschmitz (Magdeburg), Hans Citroen (Amsterdam), Otto Schmalhausen (Antwerp), Hans Arp, Francis Picabia and many others. Max Ernst called himself Dadamax Ernst and exhibited *Dadafex maximus* and *Codex national et index de la délicatesse du Dada Baargeld*; Otto Schmalhausen, who called himself Dada-oz, exhibited the head of Beethoven with moustache and squinting eyes, which calls to memory Duchamp's mustachioed Mona Lisa. With the exception of Haussmann (called Dadasophe) and Hanna Höch, who contributed collages, objects and drawings not unlike those of Arp and Picabia, the exhibits of the Berlin Dadaists all reveal the same intentions. Grosz, Heartfield and Baader were particularly subversive, though the latter's revolutionary inclinations were sharpened by his personality and insanity. Practically all Grosz' drawings and collages dealt with politics and propaganda; Heartfield, under the direction of Grosz, at that time marshal of Dada, had constructed various mannequins, one of which, to be hung from the ceiling, represented a German officer with a pig's head (cf. Höch, No. *395).

One of Johannes Baader's exhibits was labelled: *The baggage of Surdada upon his first flight from the madhouse, 17 September 1899, Dada relic. Historical*. This entry draws attention to a singular aspect of Dada—unbridled insanity, an anarchical

force describing a trajectory toward extinction. The following are the titles with which Baader chose to design himself: "Surdada, president of the Justice of the world, secret president of intertelligical superdadaist nations, agent for headmaster Hagendorf's school desks, ex-architect and writer." In November 1918 he had managed to climb, unobserved, into the pulpit of the Berlin Cathedral, from which he proclaimed that Dada would save the world. At the congress of the Weimar Constitution he launched a tract[†] signed by "The Central Council of Dada for the World Revolution," in which appeared such phrases as: "the President of the terrestrial globe sits on the saddle of Dada. The Dadaists against Weimar." To finish off the day he had processions of children sing and dance around the statues of Goethe and Schiller. All Baader's activities bear the imprint of that particular lyric insanity which is typical of Dada in its expansive moods, when it comes out into the open, absurd and profound, grave and grotesque, but always human in the most direct manner possible (cf. Baader, No. *289).

4. Cologne

Since 1910 Hans Arp and Max Ernst had exhibited off and on with painters whose work differed widely from theirs. They met in Cologne in 1913 and became friends. Extraordinary as it may seem, Arp was at this time under the combined influence of Cubism and of the earliest experimenters in abstract painting (p. 12) or, to be more precise, under the influence of Kandinsky. Arp became a collaborator of the Munich *Der blaue Reiter*,[†] an artistic anthology edited by Kandinsky. He also joined the more advanced group *Moderner Bund*, also expressionist in tendency. Finally we

should mention that Paul Klee exerted a certain influence upon Arp (cf. Arp, Nos. *264, *265, *267; also Kandinsky, Nos. *226, 228 and Klee, Nos. *231, 232).

As for Max Ernst, connected for a time with the expressionist *Sturm* group in Berlin (directed by Herwarth Walden) he painted with no particularly defined intention. He must, however, have admired Picasso's *papiers collés*, and pictures with extraneous objects pasted or nailed upon them. Ernst sensed in these technical innovations the sign of a new freedom: at the same time he had a foreboding that in the game they played the stake was really the creation of a spiritual world whose existence was then only potential. Later, in 1919, at the height of the Dada period in Cologne, other influences are noticeable in Ernst: one, somewhat removed, of Archipenko in his sculpto-paintings, another, more obvious, of de Chirico visible for instance in *Fiat modes*, an album of lithographs by Ernst (Cologne 1920) (cf. Ernst, Nos. 327, 328; also Picasso, No. *251 and de Chirico, Nos. *190, *196, *211).

Immediately after the War Ernst met Baargeld, who also lived in Cologne. Baargeld was a painter and a poet. The history of Dada in Cologne may be summed up in their two names with the addition of Arp's. The *Ventilator*, a Dada paper, mainly political, distinctly subversive, threatening and Communist, met with a great success. Sold at the gates of factories, it reached a circulation of 20,000. Its life was brief only because it was forbidden by the British Army of Occupation in the Rhineland.

Baargeld soon found himself heading both the Communists and the Dadaists of Cologne. It was he who established the Communist party in the Rhineland and allied it with the German Communist party. Nevertheless, together with Max Ernst

he energetically opposed the Berlin Dada movement because he disapproved of its exclusively propaganda spirit. Baargeld and Ernst refused *a priori* to extinguish their poetic light and to tie up all their energy in political agitation. Their dissent posed a problem which is still unsolved.

Having clarified their stand, Baargeld and Ernst published in 1919 *Bulletin D*,[†] which also served as a catalog to an exhibition, and, in February 1920, *Die Schammade*,[†] subtitled *Wake up dilettantes*. In these two bulletins we find besides the names of Ernst and Baargeld those of Arp, Picabia and Tzara with some new names, the names of the contributors to *Litterature*,[†] the Parisian Dada periodical: Aragon, Breton, Eluard, Ribemont-Dessaignes, Soupault. The unity of *Bulletin D*[†] and of *Die Schammade*[†] — rare indeed in Dada publications — should be admired no less than the excellent selection of contributors when there were so many to choose from. It is interesting to observe the influence exerted upon the Cologne group by Parisian Dada, which was by this time in full action. (A cursory mention should be made at this point of the movement called *Stupid*, born of Dada in Cologne, and which included the painters H. Hoerle, Angelina Hoerle, A. Räderscheidt and the sculptor F. W. Seiwert.)

In 1919, Baargeld and Ernst, increasingly absorbed in spontaneous or automatic painting, embarked together with Arp upon a new experiment, peculiarly Dada in spirit and extremely important (quite how important, the authors don't realize to this day). In this experiment it was not so much the result that counted as the intention and the intention was to destroy individuality. I have already spoken of the pictorial collaborations of Arp and Ernst called *Fatagaga*; now Baar-

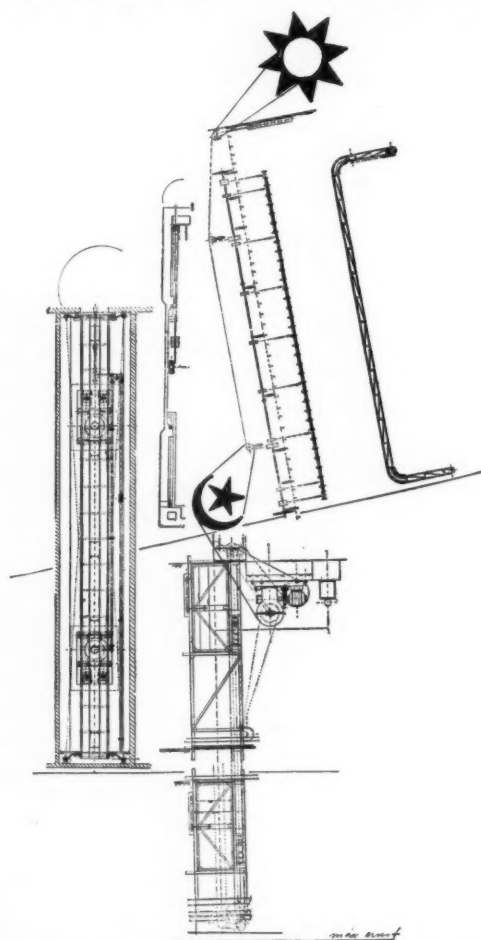
geld and Ernst start collaborating on paintings in mutual ignorance. They begin to discover in a drawing another drawing the contours of which appear slowly out of the tangled lines—like an apparition, like a prophecy, like the messages in table tapping. We are confronted here with a process not quite comparable to that of perceiving an image in a spot on the wall as Leonardo da Vinci did; nor yet does it consist of lifting an object out of its natural environment. Other forces are at work: accident and surprise at their most inscrutable and intense, the discovery of second sight in the spirit itself. The process is somewhat analogous to Dali's theory of the paranoiac image (cf. Baargeld, Nos. *292, *294 and Baargeld and Ernst, No. *297).

Ernst, led by his restless fancy, began at this time to cut out engravings and vignettes used for illustrations, and to put them together again arbitrarily in order to create the unexpected. This led to the astonishing series of collages flung by Max Ernst in the path of poetry. On the same principle he combined a set of stencil drawings consisting of tracings of fragments of machinery, of sections of architectural and scientific drawings cut up and put together again. In 1920 he sent one of these to the Paris *Section d'or*, an exhibition of dissident Cubists who refused it because it was not handmade (cf. Ernst, Nos. *330, *332, *341, *343; *346; *Trophy, hypertrophied*, No. 336, was sent to the *Section d'or*).

But to return to Cologne. A sensational exhibition was held in 1920 which included only Arp, Baargeld and Ernst. In all the history of Dada I know of no single event that seems to me more weighty or compelling. It marks the heroic period of the movement. The exhibition hall was

selected with careful foresight. The location was both accessible, in the center of the city, and outrageous, for it was in a little glass-enclosed court to which access could be gained through the lavatory of a café. This was wise; visitors were assured—visitors or victims, it didn't matter.

The blue posters, arranged by Ernst with doves and charming cows cut out of books of object lessons, hardly led one to foresee what this show of young painters



Trophy, hypertrophied, by Max Ernst, Cologne 1920; rejected by the Cubist *Section d'or* exhibition, Paris. Given to the Museum by Tristan Tzara.

would be. I can just imagine those first brave, gullible visitors in search of artistic sensations. In the center of the room stands a little girl in a religious costume reciting shocking poems. In a corner rises Baargeld's *Fluidoskeptrik*, an aquarium full of fuchsia-red fluid at the bottom of which lies an alarm clock; a marvellous lock of hair floats negligently in the water like the milky way, and from the surface there emerges a handsome arm of turned wood. Near the *Fluidoskeptrik* stands an object by Ernst in hard wood to which a hatchet is chained; visitors are invited to chop at the object if they wish, like cutting down a tree. Naturally, as the beer drinking customers of the cafe came drifting in, the exhibition received some severe treatment—the objects were broken, the aquarium destroyed and the red fluid spilt—and all to the complete triumph of Dada. A protest for obscenity was lodged with the police. The police came and had to admit that what had excited most indignation was an etching by Dürer. The exhibition was reopened. Here again, Dada's action was both demoralizing and destructive, revolutionary and antireligious.

Dada died in the same year in Berlin and in Cologne. In 1922 Max Ernst left for Paris; Arp had merely passed through Cologne on his way from Zurich to Paris; as for Baargeld, he soon gave up painting and all public activity. He died in 1927 in an avalanche.

5. Hanover

Dada came to the surface again about this time in Hanover. A publisher, Paul Stegeman, started a Dada almanac, *Der Marstall*, and also published books or albums by Arp, Huelsenbeck, Serner, Vägst

*For Tzara, Schwitters organized a lecture tour to Jena, Weimar and Hanover. In this city, after the

(a Czechoslovak Dadaist) and by Kurt Schwitters. It was Schwitters who said the last word for Dada.

Poet and painter, Schwitters occupies a particular place in the history of Dada. Avoided by the Berlin group, which was interested only in political action and which distrusted his uncertain and merely poetic attitude, he found himself isolated in Hanover. With regard to political matters, Schwitters maintained a prudence which was judged bourgeois; he was not invited to contribute to the great Berlin exhibition of 1920, which had included almost all the other German Dadaists. As a matter of fact, Hausmann and Huelsenbeck openly declared their opposition to him.

Schwitters labelled all that he painted or constructed, all his statements and books and poems with the new word *Merz*, a term with no meaning, just the fragment of a word which was to become a symbol. Like Ball and Tzara,* Schwitters wrote long poems consisting only of sounds which he recited, singing and whistling, in a most extraordinary way. His genuine and exciting personality reveals itself more fully in his life and works than in the role he attempted to play with his magazine. He managed to create around himself an atmosphere of evasion and in this, too, he was truly Dada.

His strange house evoked the impossible. When he walked on the street, he would pick up threads, papers, pieces of glass—the discarded royalties of vacant lots—so that in his house there were piles of little sticks and pieces of wood, tufts of hair, old rags, disused unrecognizable objects, all of which were like fragments of life itself. With these witnesses stolen from

lecture, there was dancing around a mannequin in one of the galleries.

the ground he constructed sculptures and objects which are by far the most disquieting things produced at the time. To the principle of the object he added a feeling of respect for everyday life in the form of dirt and deterioration. Under his influence Arp composed some objects of the same kind. But when compared to the ordinarily meticulous, mechanical neatness of Arp's objects, so baffling by their immaculateness, and to the fantastic quality of Ernst's creations, Schwitters' work seems to be endowed with the unreasonableness of dreams, with total spontaneity, with an ineluctable acceptance of hazard. Schwitters made a model for a full scale monument to humanity composed of many materials used pell-mell—wood, plaster, women's corsets, musical toys, Swiss chalets. Certain parts of the monument were to move and emit sounds. Schwitters' extremely individual collages were made of scraps of paper picked out of the mud, of trolley car tickets, of stamps and of paper money withdrawn from circulation (cf. Schwitters, Nos. *494, *670, *671).

6. Paris

Breton, Soupault, Eluard, Aragon, Ribemont-Dessaignes and the other contributors to the Paris periodical *Littérature*† (founded in 1918) were immediately attracted by the program of Dada. This seems only natural if we consider their sympathies. Their poetic and critical tradition lay between Lautréamont (Ducasse) and Rimbaud on the one hand, Jarry and Apollinaire on the other. They continued the spiritual liberation first systematically undertaken in the middle of the 19th century; consequently they were by principle resolutely modern insofar as the spirit can rise above contemporary and already compromised thought and pass judgment upon

it. Finally they were partisans of evasion and of revolt at any price. Already Jacques Vaché, a friend of Breton's, out of a personal, dangerous, disintegrating and lucid humor had managed to induce in the group a habit of disorganization of thought, logic and life. Arthur Cravan, in his periodical *Maintenant*, 1913-15, Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia had attacked the serious-mindedness and the estheticism of modern art; this appealed, of course, to the contributors to *Littérature*, whose habit of mind was a negation of reality. On the other hand, the revolutionary aspects of Rimbaud and Lautréamont swung them towards less anarchical and facile methods in the struggle they were planning. In truth, their poetic temperaments inclined them towards the marvellous, towards the fathomless depths of the subconscious recently probed by Freud, rather than to a total disorder. They needed, however, some way of making a clean slate and of getting rid of what was in their way. Dada, a phenomenon of the postwar crisis, they welcomed as a way of salvation. Here was a monster who would create the necessary void. Here was a first class offensive arm. And so, although the word Surrealism was already currently used between Breton and Soupault (authors of automatic texts, published in 1921 with the title *Les champs magnétiques*†), the group of *Littérature*, deeming no other action possible for the moment, surrendered to Dada, glittering scarecrow which stood at the crossroads of the epoch.

The *Premier vendredi de Littérature* was a confused meeting. This Friday, the 23rd of January, 1920, gathered a large audience which came to watch Dada put at liberty. First, modern poems were recited. Then masks declaimed disarticulated poetry by Breton. Under the title

Poème Tzara read a newspaper article accompanied by bells and rattles. The audience grew angry and hissed. To wind up the hullabaloo, some paintings were shown, amongst them a very shocking one by Picabia entitled, like some of his writings of the time, *LHOOQ*. After this meeting, which was meant merely to start the ball rolling, activities and publications became more abundant and outrageous.

In February, 1920, *Bulletin Dada*† is published, the sixth number of the periodical *Dada*, now permanently established in Paris. The same names figure in it: Picabia, Tzara, Breton, joined by Duchamp, Dermée, Cravan. The *Bulletin* takes an anti-pictorial and anti-literary position. Printed over drawings by Picabia were declarations, alarming proclamations, gratuitous and wantonly contradictory definitions. There is a list of Dada presidents. In large type we read: "The real Dadaists are against Dada. Every one is director of Dada . . ."

The *Bulletin Dada*† serves as a program to the second manifestation which took place on the 5th of February at the Salon des Indépendants. Thirty-eight lecturers were in line. Newspapers had announced in all seriousness the presence of Charlie Chaplin. Various tracts and manifestos were chanted in such a mad confusion that the lights had to be extinguished to bring the meeting to an end. The audience flung coins at the lecturers.

Shortly afterwards Paul Eluard launches a monthly sheet called *Proverbe*.† Its tone is different from that of all the other publications and it is concerned with a revision of language.

About this time Dada is excluded from the *Section d'or* at a riotous meeting held at the Closerie des Lilas. We have spoken of this group of artists, which included

Archipenko, Gleizes, Survage, and other Cubists. They had already refused a drawing by Ernst because it had been mechanical in execution. The *Section d'or*, embarrassed by the subversiveness of the Dadaists, wanted to make a clean break with them. The Closerie des Lilas incident marks the practical rupture of Dada with art movements.

Dada reaches its highest degree of intensity in Paris. It causes much talk and agitation. Poetry, painting and life march together on one front. Dada is ALL—and makes itself as conspicuous as possible, no matter how. Various issues of the magazines *DADAphone*,† *Cannibale*,† 391,† "Z",† define the state of mind of Dada. We find in them reproductions of works that have a great *succès de scandale*; the *Mona Lisa with a mustache* by Duchamp; the famous inkspot that Picabia entitles *Sainte Vierge*, and the toy monkey which he calls *Portrait of Cézanne*. *Littérature*† prints twenty-three Dada manifestos.

Because this brief history of Dada has to do primarily with painting, I shall omit many extremely interesting events of this period. The Dada spirit was most conspicuously proclaimed in theatrical and public performances which were more shocking verbally than visually. Two of these Dada public *soirées* must, however, be mentioned, one at the *Théâtre de l'oeuvre* and one at the *Salle Gaveau*, for as a result of these, Dada was first characterized as German and as Bolshevistic.

But, returning to painting, we must describe some of the most important Dada exhibitions of the years 1920 to 1922, after which Dada came to an end. Tristan Tzara organized at the *Sans Pareil* a show of the recent works of Picabia, mechanical drawings and pictures in which real objects are incorporated. This was followed by a Max

Ernst exhibition with a catalog[†] introduction by Breton. The invitation to the show welcomes "*le petit et la petite . . .*" and announces: "at 10 p.m. the Kangaroo; at 10.30 high frequency; at 11 distribution of prizes; from 11.30 on intimacies." Max Ernst's collages and his imaginative paintings based on mechanical inventions, utilize, in the pictorial field, automatic processes not unlike those of Breton and Soupault in *Les champs magnétiques*.[†] They contributed to Dada painting a new and particular vision which foreshadows Surrealism (cf. Picabia, Nos. *462, 463, 465; Ernst, Nos. *343, etc., *349, 350, 351).

From the point of view of setting and arrangement the Ernst exhibition was a grand success. This is what a contemporary journalist wrote about it: "With characteristic bad taste the Dadaists make their appeal this time to the human instinct of fear. The scene is in a cellar with all the lights in the shop extinguished. Moanings are heard through a trap door. Another wag, hidden behind a cupboard, insults the more important visitors. . . . The Dadaists, with no neckties and wearing white gloves, walk around the place. Breton crunches matches. G. Ribemont-Dessaignes keeps on remarking at the top of his voice, 'It's raining on a skull.' Aragon mews like a cat, Ph. Soupault plays hide and seek with Tzara, Benjamin Péret and Charchoune never stop shaking hands. On the threshold, Jacques Rigaut counts out loud the cars and the pearls of the lady visitors."

The ensuing week the Ribemont-Dessaignes exhibition was announced as a *Breeding course of microcardiacal cigarettes and of electrical mountain climbing*, preface by Tristan Tzara. Ribemont-Dessaignes, whose name I find for the first time in 391[†] in 1917, had written the

Dumb Canary and the Emperor of China[†] (1916), two astonishing plays that prove him to be a very pure Dadaist. His work represented geometrical and mechanical forms in motion and were somewhat influenced by Picabia (cf. Ribemont-Dessaignes, Nos. 481-484).

A Man Ray exhibition reveals to Paris his pictorial and photographic researches. At this time, a series of his rayographs are published in an album entitled *Les champs délicieux*. In these amazing pictures, reality assumes a face which is at the same time actual and mysterious (cf. Ray, Nos. 471-474).

Breton writes a preface to a retrospective show of de Chirico. In this, as in most of his other writings, Breton seems to depend very little on Dada: "During our time a few wise men, Lautréamont, Apollinaire, have held up for universal admiration the umbrella, the sewing machine, the top hat." Breton points out that a new modern mythology is coming into being. Haunted by Surrealism, liberated by the anarchy of Dada, Breton builds something new and finds in de Chirico, who is more Surrealist than Dada, a world to be explored (cf. de Chirico, Nos. *190-215).

At the Galerie Montaigne other activities are staged to bring the Dada season to a close, among them an important permanent exhibition. The works of painters and poets are shown together. A very fine catalog[†] lists works by Arp, Baargeld, Duchamp, Max Ernst, Man Ray, Ribemont-Dessaignes, and publishes poems of Tzara, Eluard, Péret, Arp and Aragon. Dada was meeting opposition within its own ranks, for Breton, who was opposed to activities of this kind on the part of an anti-literary and anti-artistic group, had refused to participate. Among the most remarkable entries sent by the poets was a mirror of

Soupault's entitled *Portrait of an unknown*, and a piece of asphalt which bore the title *Cité du Retiro*. Certain paintings by Duchamp supposed to be in this exhibition were replaced by sheets of paper marked with numbers which corresponded to the Duchamp entries in the catalog. Duchamp, who had been asked to take part in the exhibition, had just cabled from New York: "Nuts."

In order to maintain itself, Dada tried to invade life more directly and intimately. Dada visits and walks were organized in Paris. But a new affair, "Le Congrès de Paris," precipitated events which were to bring about the end of Dada. Tired of the organized pranks of Dada, Breton consented to take part in this Congress, of which the aim was to *determine the direction and the defense of the modern spirit*. In the midst of uncertainty Breton was intent upon taking stock and seized this occasion against the opposition of his friends who were still attached to Dada. Dissensions, rivalries, personal quarrels, contradictory tendencies accelerated disintegration. A play by Tzara, *Le coeur à gaz*, brought confusion to its zenith, arbitrarily uniting and separating poets and painters. Finally, Breton managed to bring together again around *Littérature*,† now definitely taking its leave of Dada, a nucleus of ex-Dadaists joined by some new poets. Reproductions of Picasso, Max Ernst, Duchamp, de Chirico, whose works appear in a new light, mingle with texts which indi-

GALERIE MONTAIGNE

du 6 au 30 juin 13, av. Montaigne 10 à 6

SOIRÉE le 10 juin à 8^h 30.
MATINÉES les 18 & 30 juin à 5^h 30.

NUL
n'est censé
IGNORER
DADA

A MORT



PIÈCES
à
DADA

Qui est-ce qui veut une paire de claques

myosotis, s.r.l.

ON CHERCHE

ATHLÈTES

IMMOBILISATION

Salon Dada

EXPOSITION INTERNATIONALE

Cover of the catalog of the "Salon Dada," Galerie Montaigne, Paris, 1922. From the Library of the Museum of Modern Art.

cate a systematic research in the realm of poetry and criticism, and in the world of the subconscious and of hypnotic sleep. A new period begins. Picabia, still faithful to Dada, but in an increasingly light and humorous manner, leaves this circle, which grows in size and which will constitute by 1924 the initial group of the Surrealists in the true sense of the word, who are gathered around Breton when he issues the *Premier manifeste du Surréalisme*.†



Hector and Andromache, about 1916, by Giorgio de Chirico.

In the Light of Surrealism

by Georges Hugnet

When the word Surrealism no longer appeared in quotation marks in critical and theoretical writings, the meaning of the term was established: it had acquired a direction and a will of its own. Surrealism springs from the marvellous, and it has always existed. As the earth dreams its dreams of stone, so man from the very first has taken refuge in dreams as in a magic rock around which life, the elements and the stars revolve. Now and again in the course of time voices have spoken in accents which we do not hesitate to call Surrealist, giving unexpected expression to a reality only vaguely understood yet as dizzily evident as a blazing meteor. Perpetually, beyond the limits of time, a force exists which pervades the realm of the rational and of the irrational: at times it consents to put in a ghostly appearance. Of these haunting flashes I cannot make an inventory nor yet can I trap them into the cramped cage of the possible.

In this brief essay on Surrealist painting I shall mention dates, places, facts, attitudes and works in an effort to determine historically within our peculiarly marvellous and desolate epoch, the times and circumstances in which certain men, dissatisfied with life and reality, watched for the crack in the wall, for the loose bar in the prison window, and so made Surrealism conscious of itself. Thanks to its persistent exploration of the mind, of the sources of thought, of inspiration and of the inexpressible, it became a working system for acquiring knowledge, it undertook the rediscovery and the recreation of the world of reality.

The first theoretical foundations were laid in 1924 by the *First Surrealist Mani-*

fest.[†] After describing the confusion and crises which followed in the steps of the War, the author, André Breton, recounts his personal experiences and the predicaments of those in whose name he speaks; then, after tracing the initial stages of the Surrealist activity, he sums up its aims in definitions suitable for an encyclopaedia; he uses this device in order to be precise and impressive; he does not mean, however, to lay down ironbound formulae, recipes for poetry for practical operations in the manner of *L'Archidoxe Magique* of Paracelsus. Breton then investigates the origins of poetry in the works and in the lives of those who sought to escape reality by adventure or by the creation of a special setting. He explains in what and why certain men were or are Surrealist. But, as the Surrealist quality or attitude is not always complete, he qualifies: "I insist, they were not always Surrealist for I can distinguish in them a certain number of preconceived ideas to which — naïvely enough — they were attached. They were attached to them because they had not heard the Surrealist voice, the voice that goes on preaching till the very eve of death and above the howl of the storm, because they did not want to be used in the orchestration of the marvellous score. They were too proud and that is why they have not always given forth a harmonious sound."

Breton, after the levelling action of anarchical Dada, proposes to declare allegiance to folly, to dreams, to the absurd, to the incoherent, to the hyperbolic—in a word—to all that is contrary to the general appearance of reality. Is not Surrealism within everyone's reach? The vast maps of

dreams and of desires still hang on every wall. Who has not suddenly heard—perhaps just for a second—the imperious voice calling from behind the threshold of memory? Convinced from the start that “literature is a sad road that leads anywhere (*à tout*),” Breton wishes only to let himself go to unbridled imagination. The more this contradicts all known trends of thought, the better. He attacks “*the hatred of the marvellous wherever it rages*.” He declares that the “*marvellous is always beautiful, in fact only the marvellous is beautiful*.” He puts at the disposal of those who would venture into the realm of the marvellous not only poetic arguments, but the means to investigate modern thought and, above all, the new and decisive interpretation of psychoanalysis. During the course of Surrealist development, outside all forms of idealism, outside the opiates of religion, the marvellous comes to light within reality. It comes to light in dreams, obsessions, preoccupations, in sleep, fear, love, chance; in hallucinations, pretended disorders, follies, ghostly apparitions, escape mechanisms and evasions; in fancies, idle wanderings, poetry, the supernatural and the unusual; in empiricism, in *super-reality*. This element of the marvellous, relegated for so long to legends and children’s fairy tales, reveals now in a true light, in a Surrealist light, the immanent reality and our relations to it. Surrealism has never doubted its power to “resolve the heretofore contradictory conditions of dream and of reality into an absolute reality, a super-reality.” Surrealism will persist in forwarding and consolidating the identification of contraries which every modern discovery proves to be possible and true. The graph which would trace through the course of time the attraction of irreconcilables would be the history of

Surrealism. Surrealism lowers its barriers against those who consider it impossible to verify reality.

2

In the case of Surrealism even more than in the case of Dada it is difficult to separate the experiments and the activities of the painters from those of the writers, for Surrealism is a mental attitude and a method of investigation; its action runs parallel in every field; time has proved valid the behaviour that it has established for itself. Surrealism raises its voice in the name of man, in the name of poetry, in the name of an entire system of creation. In every field of endeavour the preoccupations are the same, be they formal or moral. Their exterior manifestations are analogous in character, their spirit sheds the same light and the same shadow. Exhibitions, experiments, works of theory and poetry merge, justify each other and are mutually exalting. To Surrealism, its relations with itself and its time are more important than its relations with individuals.

Dada gave back to current ideas their original vigor: Surrealism, under the impulse of André Breton, is dedicated to a revision of values. It picks up the lost thread from the immediate past. Painting, considered from a new angle, undergoes a metamorphosis. Certain painters known heretofore only because sensational or original are esteemed by Surrealism not for these qualities but because they seem to unveil wished for worlds, to propose exciting questions. Subversiveness itself is charged now with a deeper meaning. Seurat seems Surrealist to Breton in his choice of motifs and Picasso in his Cubism. Cubist estheticism is condemned but its denial of reality, in favor of a superior reality, is counted in its favor. Certain ob-

jects composed by Picasso in 1913 and 1914 take on considerable importance: seen in a Surrealist light, they shed a strange radiance. Some intentions, experiments, methods and achievements are registered, others are deliberately rejected. Some names fall, others spring up, and still others are born again (*cf. Cubism and Abstract Art*, plates 98, 99).

In 1933 Max Ernst writes: "The investigations into the mechanism of inspiration which have been ardently pursued by the Surrealists, lead them to the discovery of certain techniques, poetic in essence, and devised to remove the work of art from the sway of the so-called conscious faculties. These techniques, which cast a spell over reason, over taste and the conscious will, have made possible a vigorous application of Surrealist principles to drawing, to painting and even, to an extent, to photography. These processes, some of which, especially collage, were employed before the advent of Surrealism, are now modified and systematized by Surrealism, making it possible for certain men to represent on paper or on canvas the dumbfounding photograph of their thoughts and of their desires." And Paul Eluard in 1936 says: "It is only when objects become complicated that they become possible to describe. Picasso contrived to paint the simplest objects in such a way that everyone again became, not only able, but eager to describe them. For the artist as for the most uncultivated man, there are neither concrete forms nor abstract forms. There is only a communication between what sees and what is seen—an effort to understand, an establishment of relationship, almost a determination, a creation. To see is to understand, to judge, to deform, to imagine, to forget or forget oneself, to be or to disappear."

3

Together with the well known names of Picasso, de Chirico and Max Ernst, we find in the first number of *La Révolution Surréaliste*† a new name: André Masson. This painter who had not belonged to any movement comes to Surrealism with a series of painting and drawings which he had exhibited some months earlier at the Galerie Simon, 1924. Devoid of any investigation of materials, having no plastic preoccupation except that of a sort of chemistry of lines, the work of Masson at this time outlines the new frontiers of a poetic world of very pure similes: landscapes take on strange human forms, ghosts peep behind transparent vaults, doves live like little girls, daggers like men, under broken capitals which miraculously take flight. Hands enliven still-lives, objects take on a special life beyond the control of the fascinated eye (*cf. Masson*, Nos. 413, *414, 415, *416, 417-*421, *423).

Nearly at the same time another aspect of the human universe, of the Surrealist universe, is revealed by a painter from Catalonia: Joan Miro. At first Miro had been satisfied with reproducing as well as possible a world enlivened by his fancy. Then, faces, houses, gardens, objects—the superfluous, in a word—gave way to a fantastic, naïve, vibrant reality, to passion, to humor, to a luxurious vegetation issuing from the most unbridled dreams and from the most absolute manual spontaneity. These irrevocable paintings, composed without metaphor, were exhibited in 1925, under the aegis of the Surrealist group and with a preface by Benjamin Péret (*cf. Miro*, Nos. *430, 431-33, *434).

The second number of *La Révolution Surréaliste*† described French art as a scarecrow, and arbitrarily separated paint-

ing from art in order to tie it up with automatism, with dreams, and revelations. Along with the reproductions of paintings, we find strange photographs, curious documents, mediums' drawings, and drawings by poets accompanied by transcriptions of dreams and automatic texts. The Surrealist atmosphere becomes so explicit that it needs no explanation.

André Breton and Robert Desnos collaborate on the preface † to the first Surrealist exhibition in November 1925. It includes Arp, de Chirico, Ernst, Klee, Masson, Miro, Picasso, Man Ray, Pierre Roy. Poems by Eluard, Desnos and Péret serve as an accompaniment to Ernst's one man show of recent canvasses which depict admirable forests enlivened by the most beautiful Surrealist images. The Surrealist gallery is opened and shows works of Arp, Braque, de Chirico, Duchamp, Ernst, Klee, Malkine, Masson, Miro, Picabia, Picasso, Man Ray, Tanguy (cf. Arp, Nos. *276, 274; Ernst, Nos. 354, *355, 356-359; Masson, No.

*416; Miro, No. 434; Picabia, No. 466; Ray, No. *474; Tanguy, No. *490; Klee, Nos. *234-242).

Let us repeat that Surrealism makes its own certain attempts, certain behaviours, certain attitudes while it rejects others. It exalts what strengthens it, it keeps what helps it, it eliminates what diminishes it. It claims the marvellous liberating power of Picasso, Duchamp, Picabia, Arp, Ernst, Man Ray. Its researches and interpretations establish their stand on a foundation of humor, subversiveness and dreams; in the evasion of all that is conventional.

Surrealism lives in de Chirico's cities and in his superb dislocations, but his more recent works, academic in style, dishonor the author of the *Disquieting muses*. A pamphlet in the form of a preface peremptorily puts an end to the whole question and one of his pictures appears crossed out in *La Révolution Surréaliste* (cf. de Chirico, Nos. *190-*215).

The Surrealist Gallery keeps abreast of all the Surrealist activities: it shows not only pictures but books, illustrated publications, manuscripts, documents and objects. Together with an exhibition of primitive objects, amongst them some admirable masks from New Mecklenburg, is held an exhibition of paintings by Man Ray. Their very particular poetry consists in technical inventions and in unprecedented images of reality and unreality mysteriously precise like mathematical magic.

Shortly afterward, Yves Tanguy presents his first paintings, which are Surrealist daylight itself. For the past ten years, Tanguy, lyrically inspired, has described in one picture after another an immense and troubling panorama, a unique universe, complete, resembling only itself, where nothing can be recognized in anything, where one can see everything and nothing,



A relief in painted jigsaw and planking by Hans Arp; in the collection of Miss Katherine S. Dreier.

dead cities and cities coming into being, marble ruins, dream ant-hills, where the laws of gravity are but a game and the horizon only an ultimate concession. Between the technical discoveries of a Max Ernst and the extreme manual freedom of a Miro whose automatism is in both cases peremptory, Tanguy paints without make-up and without premeditation but with the meticulousness of a coral. In the course of a questionnaire concerning painting, Tanguy declares: "I expect nothing from reflection but I am sure of my reflexes." The painting of Tanguy withstands all tests. Before the blank canvas, dream and instinct direct his hand. A spot is born, an object appears, it propagates, it evolves. A strange landscape fills the desert to which a splendid clarity gives depth. For his first exhibition Breton wrote the preface (cf. Tanguy, Nos. *498-*509).

4

During the same period, Pierre Roy was showing, with a preface† by Aragon, his paintings whose elements were hardly less removed from their natural sphere than those of de Chirico. Among the Surrealist publications of this year, the most important after the astonishing *Répétitions*† of Eluard, decorated with collages by Max Ernst, was the *Dormir, dormir dans les pierres*,† by Péret, illustrated by Tanguy, and Eluard's *Defense de savoir*,† with a frontispiece by de Chirico. The Surrealist Gallery was exhibiting pictures by Malkine. Several shows by Ernst were held (cf. Roy, Nos. *474, *475).

Breton presented Surrealist pictorial activity in his *Le Surréalisme et la peinture*.† In this he went back to essentials, he tracked down intentions. He expressed admiration for the works of certain painters who, working under various labels and us-

ing various technical means, had liberated painting from its previously puny role. Reopening the question of what is real, he singled out those who had touched true reality, those who had gone to the heart of the subject, to the core of the great trees of the forest of the marvellous. In emphasizing what touched him and exalted him in the work of these painters, he expressed a renewed hope for painting. "The narrow concept of imitation as the goal of art is at the source of the serious misunderstanding which we see perpetuated even in our own time. Basing their work on the belief that man is capable only of reproducing more or less happily the superficial image of that which moves him, painters have shown themselves much too conventional in the choice of their subjects. Their mistake was to suppose that the subject could be taken only from the external world, whereas it should not be taken from the external world at all. It is true that human sensibility can give to the most ordinary object an unexpected distinction; but the magic power of the imagination is put to very feeble use indeed if it serves merely to preserve or reinforce that which already exists. That is an inexcusable abdication. It is impossible, in the present state of modern thought, when the exterior world appears more and more suspect, to agree any longer to such a sacrifice. The work of art, if it is to assist in that absolute revision of values, upon which we all agree, must base itself upon a purely subjective inspiration or it will cease to exist."

At the same time in which he states the current situation of Surrealism in its plastic activities, André Breton, with that clairvoyance and extraordinary lucidity which distinguishes him, defines Surrealist painting by indicating its goal, by revealing its magic power, by discovering the problems

which face it. In this connection *Le Sur-réalisme et la peinture*† is a book of capital importance. As in the case of all Surrealist activities, painting becomes a document in which man is revealed to himself, in which he sets up a hypothesis which serves as a basis for all possible inductions. In painting, as in the poem and the image, man ought to offer the key of the secret lock in order to find again the peace which is lacking in the perpetual clock.

5

Certain technical processes: the use of elements foreign to painting, mechanical drawings, collages, and other experiments were, as we have seen, intended only to get painting out of its rut or, under the impulsion of Dada, to destroy ideas of beauty, of quality, of purity, to exalt disorder, to deny at all costs. Systematized, directed, exploited by Surrealism, these processes no longer lead to destruction but become methods of investigation. The written Surrealist games: questions and answers, sentences written by a group transposed into drawings lead to the creation of curious figures: "exquisite corpses."

The process of collage, introduced or in any case used in a special fashion for the first time by Max Ernst, is in this connection very instructive. To this process Max Ernst has added another, *frottage* or rubbing, by which he reveals with infinite variety the otherwise invisible secrets of objects. When Surrealism interrogates chance, it is to obtain oracular replies (cf. Ernst, Nos. 358, *360, 372).

To the Cubist *papiers collés*, where a plastic preoccupation prevails, the Surrealist collages add the supernatural spark of that anonymous and mechanical liberty which transports painting outside its own

limits. The ready-made elements taken from life, still living: wall-paper, newspaper, poster, cloth, marbling, graining, sand, string . . . delivered painting from its conventional ideal, and renewed the problem of reality, the miserable understanding of truth. The public's reaction: "*this is not painting*," by itself proves the intense reality of the *papier collé*, the super-reality of collage. The transmutation of materials, a guitar made of iron, of cloth . . . emphasizes the reality of the object (cf. Picasso, No. *251; Ernst, Nos. *330, *341, *343; also *Cubism and Abstract Art*: Picasso, plates 65, 67; Braque, plate 64; Gris, plate 66).

Tristan Tzara has written very justly: "A form plucked from a newspaper and introduced in a drawing or picture incorporates a morsel of everyday reality into another reality constructed by the spirit. The contrast between materials which the eye is capable of transposing almost into a tactile sensation, gives a new dimension to the picture in which the object's weight, set down with mathematical precision by symbols, volume and density, its very taste on the tongue, its consistency brings before us a unique reality in a world created by the force of the spirit and the dream." The Surrealist collage and particularly the admirably captioned collages of Max Ernst (*La Femme 100 têtes*,† 1929; *Rêve d'une petite fille qui voulut entrer au Carmel*,† 1930; *Une semaine de bonté*,† 1934) are the fruit of imagination, of inspiration freed from caution, transforming the spirit into matter and putting itself within the reach of all. The incorporation in a picture of an element foreign to painting conciliates the irreconcilable. It is from this resolved contradiction that art dies: just as it dies in the works of lunatics when they tyrannically identify objective ap-

pearances and oneiric delirium. To this identification Surrealism contributes a freedom of experiment and of rationalization, a transition from the unconscious to the conscious, a will to analysis, which creates a marvellous world at once poetic and critical. "The painter," says Louis Aragon in *La Peinture au défi*,[†] "if he should still be called painter, is no longer tied to his picture by a mysterious physical relationship as if he had given birth to it. With the breakdown of this conception the individuality of choice comes into play. A manufactured object can be set into a picture, in fact it can even be the whole picture. Picabia may decide that an electric light is a young girl. Painters are now using objects as if they were words. Incantation has been invented again by the new magicians." This individuality of choice is as personal and distinctive in each painter as the selection of words and the reappearance of certain images is in each poet; chance, unconsciousness and automatism do not destroy these personal predilections. In hallucination, reiterated clichés, reiterated expressions, betray the man and it is this betrayal that Surrealism requires (cf. Ernst, No. *362, Nos. *330, *341).

6

As the Surrealist universe becomes visible, as the Surrealist spirit and behaviour become more sharply defined, a kind of Surrealist beauty comes into being. André Breton in 1928 concludes his book *Nadja*[†] with this decisive phrase: "Beauty will be convulsive or will not be." *Convulsive beauty* can be born only from the Surrealist image, from the automatic image by which the imagination itself is stunned. Lautréamont who announced: "The new shivers in the intellectual atmosphere" prophesied this implacable beauty in his

simile: "beautiful as the trembling of hands in inebriation," and in this other simile in which the excitement of dislocation is wonderfully rendered: "Beautiful as the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table." This unexpected, arbitrary beauty, these dumbfounding juxtapositions are the very voice of Surrealism. From such images, tyrannically unforgettable, springs all that is un hoped for, all that is admirable in its jagged, lightning-torn contours. I am thinking of some of Breton's and Eluard's incomparable images, identifications which remain indelible. In the visual field it is de Chirico who revealed such juxtapositions to us and introduced into Surrealist painting a whole range of possibilities. De Chirico created a tradition in which many imaginations developed. I allude especially to a painter who first makes his appearance in Surrealism in 1929 — René Magritte. He contributes poetic images quite personal to himself, painted most tangibly and emanating a strange fascination. His paintings are an unbroken series of concrete object lessons which require no technical commentary. Their astonished reality seems more convincing than the reality of a photograph (cf. Magritte, Nos. *409-412).

At the same moment as Breton in his *Second Surrealist Manifesto*[†] proceeds towards an evaluation of the Surrealist spirit, a new painter assumes a role of capital importance. The poetic, pictorial and critical contributions of Salvador Dali turned Surrealist research in a particular direction and gave a strong impulse to experiments which had been approached till then only in the most tentative fashion. His work is like an immense carnivorous flower blooming in the Surrealist sun. Moved by the lyrical expression of certain

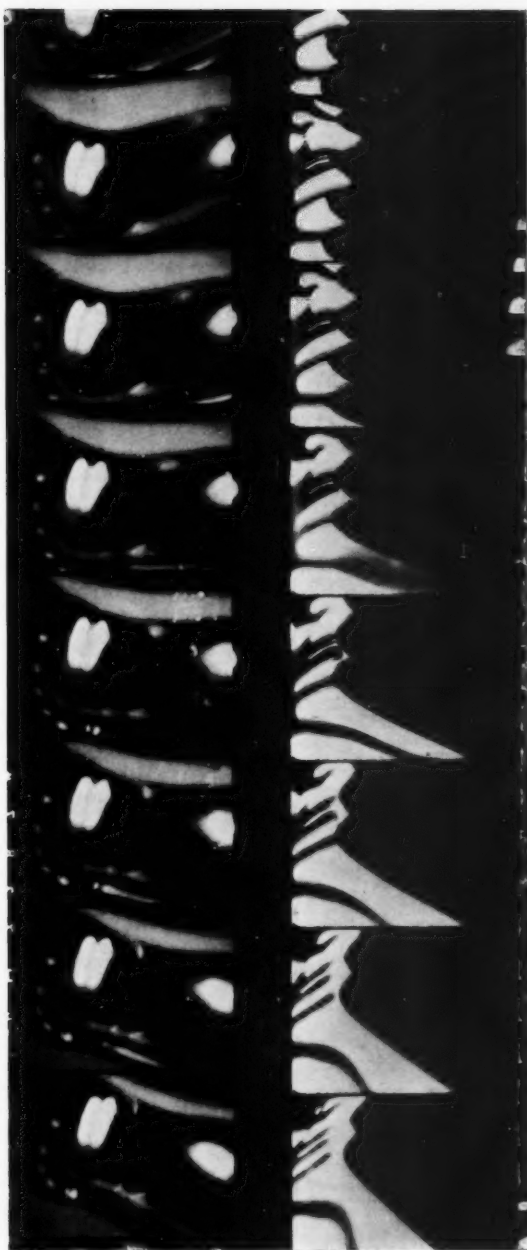
works of Ernst and Tanguy rather than won over by their plastic processes, and carrying to its extreme conclusions certain statements of the *First Manifesto*,† he gives full rein to dreams and hallucinations which he represents in the most faithful and meticulous way. He asserts his taste for chromolithographs, the most colored, the most complete, and the least accidental imitation of nature. He disdains all experiment with surfaces and all the familiar clichés of the painter's craft. He puts his "manner," his pictorial talent directly at the service of delirium. The *trompe-l'oeil* is his way out. He creates a feverish world in which roles are played by simulations, physical illnesses, nervous conditions, sexual phenomena, inhibitions. Without inconsistency his range extends from collage to chromo, from ready-made objects to perfect illusions, from de Chirico and Picasso to Millet and Meissonier—and all by the method of paranoiac obsession. His experiments, though remarkably fruitful, could not be successfully vulgarized. His conception of the purpose of painting accounts for his anti-artistic tendency, his delight in double images, and his desire to make his paintings like "handmade snapshots." His method of subjective criticism, his interpretation of the most familiar works of art as recurrent obsessions, his acceptance of every aberration both in his paintings and in his writings, and his respect for dreams in their integrity no matter how contradictory, are all essential contributions to Surrealist documentation (cf. Dali, Nos. *310, *311, 312-315, *320, *322).

Dali is deeply interested in insanity, hysteria, trance phenomena, every symptom of mania; it is not surprising therefore that in the field of art he should find that debilitated and debilitating style known

in America as *Art Nouveau* particularly fascinating. Its architecture of dank and petrified hair, its sonnambulist furniture of unmeasured flowers, are rich in irrational confusion like the fruit of a collective hallucination—and excellent material for Surrealist interpretation. All that is neurotic is worthy of investigation. As Eluard says of certain fantastic postcards so popular in pre-war times: "Commissioned by the exploiters to amuse the exploited, they should not, however, be counted a popular art. They are, rather, the small change of art and of poetry: and this small change sometimes reveals ideas of gold." These various discoveries are in no way contradictory, in fact they accumulate to form the contemporary domain of the marvellous. Seen from the Surrealist viewpoint this is all perfectly consistent: the bizarre and the anti-artistic, accident and dream, automatic writing and delirium, critical interpretation and hallucinatory symbols, paintings and ordinary objects, poetry and everyday life. Here is a history of men's wishes, here are the grandiose dreams of the world traversed by invisible rays and magnetic lightnings. Little by little in these fathomless depths, penetrated by the light of Surrealism, new strata of reality come into being (cf. Dali, No. *311; Guimard, Nos. *661-663; Gaudi, Nos. *649, *653, *654, *657).

7

A new periodical is founded: *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution*.† It continues to reproduce the work of artists and to give information as to their activities. Like Baargeld and Ernst in Cologne during the Dada period, the Surrealist painters refuse to bow to the exigencies of politics and to work for purposes of propaganda. Painting, like poetry, persists in



Two strips from the Surrealist film, *Emak Bakia*, made by the American artist, Man Ray, in Paris, 1927. A print of this film was recently given by the artist to the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.

its role of investigator into the *immense undetermined region over which reason does not extend its protectorate*. The principles of dialectical materialism are endorsed unconditionally by Surrealism, its attitude is revolutionary, but it wishes to cooperate in transforming the conditions of human life by its own methods.

There are however some obviously subversive works that may be mentioned here. For instance the paintings of Clovis Trouille accepted by the Surrealist group, and *L'Age d'or*, a film by Dali and Bunuel which after a violent scandal was forbidden by the French censors in 1930. Essentially Surrealist in image and plot, *L'Age d'or* was purposely savage in content, anti-religious, shocking and aggressive. This was in line with the program of Surrealism as continually proven by Surrealist manifestos and protests as well as by the kind of poetry of which Péret is the most brilliant master.

The film, better than any other medium, can give life to the Surrealist image. Let us mention the extraordinary metamorphoses of Man Ray's *Etoile de Mer*‡ and that admirable fragment of Surrealist life, *Le chien andalou*.‡ Already in 1922 Duchamp and Man Ray had attempted to translate into the language of the cinema their poetic and plastic preoccupations. Other films to be counted as Surrealist because of their technique or because they conjure up exciting situations not unlike Surrealist collages are Man Ray's *Emak Bakia*‡ and *La perle* by H. d'Arches and G. Hugnet.

8

The publication of Surrealist books makes it possible for painters to accompany poetic texts with drawings and etchings that do not need to follow any of the usual

limitations of illustration. Max Ernst illustrates works of Eluard, Tzara, Péret; Tanguy, works of Eluard, Péret; Dali, works of Breton, Eluard, Hugnet; Miro, works of Tzara, Péret, Hugnet; Picasso, works of Péret and Eluard; Giacometti, works of Breton and Crevel. Crevel writes *Salvador Dali ou l'anti-obscurantisme*.‡ And, more recently, Albert Skira publishes forty-two etchings which Dali has made to illustrate Lautréamont's *Les Chants de Maldoror*.

9

Surrealism was already beginning to spread to other countries and important Surrealist movements had come into being in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. With the publication of *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution*‡ in 1930, the movement becomes more widespread. In Belgium a group formed by Mesens, Nougé and Magritte keeps in close contact with Paris. Other groups form under the direction of painters or poets: In Japan, Tiru Jamanaka, Shuzo Takiguchi, Toshio Doi, Junzaburo Nishiwaki; in Scandinavia, Bjerke-Petersen, Stellan Mörner, Freddie, Erik Olson; in the Canary Islands, Oscar Dominguez, Domingo Lopes Torres, Pedro Garcia Cabrera, Eduardo Westerdhal; and recently in England, David Gascoyne, Herbert Read, Hugh Sykes Davis. In the United States an American periodical, *transition*,‡ has given space to Surrealist activity. Breton has given lectures in Prague, Brussels, Tenerife and London; Eluard in Prague, Barcelona, Madrid, Seville, London; Dali in Paris, Péret in Tenerife. General exhibitions have been held in Prague, Brussels, Tenerife, London. In Paris there have been many exhibitions in which most of the Surrealist members were represented. (For England: cf. Agar, No. *262;

Banting, No. *299; Burra, No. *303; Hayter, No. *392; Mednikoff, No. 426; Moore, No. *445; Nash, No. 449; Pailthorpe, No. *457; Penrose, No. 458. For Belgium: cf. Mesens, No. *427; Magritte, Nos. *409-412; Canary Islands: cf. Dominguez, Nos. *324, *326; Scandinavia: No. 514).

The public has been kept in contact with the plastic activity of the movement. But I must make it clear that Surrealist painting should not be judged from an artistic or plastic point of view; it may be conceded that a painter should be able to paint but nevertheless Surrealist painting must not be judged by artistic *quality*. No work *can* be, no work *may* be considered from this point of view. Surrealist objects which we are about to discuss are very important but they are in no sense the result of an esthetic interest in *representation*.

In 1931 the role of *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution* is complemented by *Minotaure*† and *Cahiers d'Art*† which publish special numbers on Surrealism.

Beside the new paintings of Tanguy, Dali, Ernst, Magritte, there appear the marvellous sculpture-objects of Giacometti in wood, stone and plaster, settings of poetic precision, palaces of sleep where mysterious dramas are enacted at daggers drawn, games whose bizarre and lucid rules are derived from dreams. The mobile objects of Giacometti functioning like dream-machines from the landscapes of Ernst or Tanguy give a new impulse to the creation of Surrealist objects (cf. Giacometti, Nos. *377-379).

Valentine Hugo awakens in the ghosts of the past the legends of the day. The baffling paintings and drawings of Victor Brauner illustrate impossible adventures where imperturbable figures obey only the laws of obsession. Hans Bellmer succeeds in endowing his articulated doll with a

fresh and amorous life steeped in an atmosphere of wonder; his photographs of her reflect the complexities of his spirit, she undergoes metamorphoses, she dies, she gasps again the burning spark of love. His objects, his drawings reveal an unexpected anatomy haunted by an amorous life which identifies itself with poetry. In contrast with Man Ray's recent photographs where the human element and poetic anecdote are apt to prevail, Dora Maar's photographs are full of an unexpected eroticism combined with dislocations borrowed from collage. The works of Meret Oppenheim lie on the margin between paintings and objects. Paalen and the Czechish painters Toyen and Styrsky reveal a research regulated by automatism and find in it a new realism. S. W. Hayter, Roland Penrose, Eileen Agar, Paul Nash organize amazing constructions where the world of dreams condemns the world of reality. The stories told by Marcel Jean's etchings (*Mourir pour la patrie*, 1935) distract reason into hallucination. Oscar Dominguez by *trompe-l'oeil* and Surrealist deformation evokes infinitely varied flora and fauna. A truly magic process used by Dominguez and many Surrealists is called by Breton "decalcomania with no preconceived object, decalcomania of chance" and puts within everyone's reach the makings of the most exciting poetry (cf. Valentine Hugo, Nos. *396-398; Brauner, No. 301; Maar, Nos. 404, 405; Paalen, Nos. 453-455; Oppenheim, No. *452; Hayter, Nos. 384-392; Penrose, No. 458; Agar, No. *262; Nash, No. 449; Jean, No. *401; Dominguez, Nos. *324, *326).

We have mentioned various technical processes such as Ernst's collages and *frottages* (rubblings), Man Ray's experiments in photography, Dominguez' decalcomanias in which the work of chance can be

observed under a microscope and automatism reveals the tangible trace of the marvellous hand. Parallel to these but in the field of writing are the automatic texts, the narrations of dreams, the "simulations" assembled by Breton and Eluard in *L'Immaculée Conception*,[†] one of the most exciting Surrealist books.

10

We still have to touch upon Surrealist objects, the importance of which cannot be sufficiently emphasized. Nothing that the movement has produced is more authentic, more varied, more personal and at the same time so anonymous. They have realized Lautréamont's saying "poetry must be made by all. Not by one." Related in appearance to Dada sculpto-paintings Surrealist objects are essentially different for they are the automatic, reasonless and yet material expression of inhibited wishes, anthropomorphic vegetations of the permanently unpredictable in man. Made in secret, symbolical in their function, images for the hand, they are among the most singular subjects for the study of psychoanalysis. "These objects, endowed with a minimum of mechanical function, are based on ghostly fancies and are representations provoked by unconscious acts. . . . The incarnation of these desires, the manner of their embodiment by metaphor, their symbolical realization constitute a process of erotic substitution which resembles at every point the process of poetry. Objects whose function is symbolical followed upon silent objects such as Giacometti's hanging sphere, an object which established all the essential principles of our definition but was still restricted to the medium of sculpture. Objects with symbolical function leave no loophole for formal preoccupations. Only amorous imagi-

nation is responsible for them and they are extra-plastic." It is in these terms that Salvador Dali indicates the immense possibilities of the object as the most sincere and disinterested outlet of interior activity. The absence in their creation of all plastic endeavour must be borne in mind. Surrealist objects played a conspicuous part in an exhibition as early as 1933. Especially important were the object-sculptures of Arp and Giacometti, Man Ray's objects made of everyday things, invented objects by Tanguy, poetic objects by Breton and Eluard. In June 1936 an exhibition of exclusively Surrealist objects was held in Paris in the Gallery of Charles Ratton (cf. Giacometti, Nos. *377-*379; Arp, Nos. *277, *283, *287; Ray, No. *476).

The life and function of the Surrealist object is infinitely disquieting. One gets used to usual objects, one ceases to notice them, they become idle decoration. What a difference between the objects of our deaf and dumb civilization and the real objects, the primitive object for instance. Objects are beautiful when and because they express something. Duchamp gave back to everyday objects their power of expression by his "ready-mades" and quite recently by his roto-reliefs. Arp in 1924 devised the *Planche à oeufs* (egg-board) and how to use it. As Tanguy perfects the creatures who live in the translucent air of his canvasses, as Arp polishes his "objects to be lost" adorned with mustaches and mandolins, as new objects are put into circulation for new purposes, a new and increasingly complete mythology of desire comes into existence. But neither the paintings nor the objects have any intended connection with art; they are only an attempt to establish super-reality (cf. Duchamp, Nos. *221, 224; Arp's "egg-board" arrived too late for cataloging).

An admirable realm is conjured up by the first objects of Picasso and Duchamp, the ghost object of Breton, the aphrodisiac dinner jacket of Dali, disquieting panoplies of Tanguy, the tortured realities of Miro, Ernst's totem poles struck by lightning, and by the everyday objects in fur by Meret Oppenheim. The special number of *Cahiers d'Art*† on Surrealist objects also included: mathematical objects, found objects, ready-made and ready-mades assisted, the cover itself an object, *Les coeurs volants* by Duchamp. They all reflect the universe that Surrealism has brought back to life (cf. Ernst, Nos. *369, 371; Oppenheim, No. *452; Miro, No. *444; Tanguy, No. *510; mathematical objects, Nos. *629-643; found object, No. *624; ready-made, No. *221; ready-made assisted, No. *224).

Over the mathematical object and the found object, on the practical utility of which one can speculate indefinitely, there reigns the same certitude, the same enigma; the rational and the irrational meet. Breton writes: "Applying Hegel's adage 'All that is real is rational, all that is rational is real' the rational can be expected to coincide in every point with the course of the real and in truth contemporary reason wants nothing more than to assimilate the irrational. The rational is therefore forced to reorganize itself incessantly both to consolidate itself and to enrich itself. In this sense one must admit that Surrealism is accompanied by a surrationalism that doubles and acts as a standard for it. The fact that M. Gaston Bachelard has recently inserted in the scientific dictionary the word *surrationalism*, which is supposed to indicate an entire method of thought, lends increased actuality and strictness to the word "Surrealism" which had hitherto been accepted only in a pure-

ly artistic sense. One term verifies the other, both are evidence of the common, basic state of mind which motivates man's contemporary research, be he poet, painter or scholar."

Breton goes on to say that in the "decisive words" of Paul Eluard the physics of poetry is being created. Borrowed from life the object comes back to life adorned with a formidable meaning. Instrument of experimentation, it inhabits the sumptuous laboratories of desire. The object's exceptional function in releasing impulsions by reconstituting the accessories of dreams, makes it desirable that it should be systematically exploited.

Surrealist painting, Surrealist poetry blend together and some may find it amusing to characterize Surrealist painting as literary. Let them also amuse themselves characterizing poetry by the same method as that of a man who finds that butter has the same taste as hazelnuts. André Breton attempted to blend intimately writing and visual representation, poetry and chance in his poem-objects. In *La septième face du dé* (the 7th face of the die), I myself, by means of *poèmes-découpages* (cut-out poems), made like experiments by suppressing metaphor for the sole advantage of the image (collages and objects by Surrealist poets: Breton, No. 302, Eluard, No. 326a, Jean, No. *401, Hugnet, No. 399).

II

The history of Surrealism offers subjects for meditation rather than picturesque incidents, it refuses to be classified among other "genres." What others attempted in order to avoid what has already been seen, Surrealism has undertaken in order to reach a conclusion. "Surrealism has been the only force which up to this has been able to extract from the darkroom the

truly luminous and imposing forms. Surrealism has never feared that it was going too far, it has never betrayed true impulses, it has never acted with tact, with circumspection. We know to what falsehoods all esthetic preoccupation can lead: 'beauty' and 'morals' and even to the point where the length of the beard would indicate the degree of intellect and of virility." When Man Ray wrote this sentence he was expressing with insufficient emphasis to what degree our epoch is indebted to Surrealist creations, both poetic and pictorial.

Max Ernst speaks of Surrealist activity in these terms: "Surrealism, in turning topsy-turvy the appearances and relationships of 'realities' has been able to contribute, with a smile on its lips, to the general crisis of conscience which must perforce take place in our time." I have attempted to give the feeling of this *general crisis of conscience* throughout this historical and critical essay on Surrealist painting. In Surrealism the work and the man are inseparable. Politically and poetically Surrealism seeks man's liberation. What a work of art expresses formally is of no importance—only its hidden content counts. Surrealism appeals to the imagination and fancy; it aims to take man out of himself; it proposes automatism in order to draw out of man the necessary light for his total emancipation. Surrealism restores to art its true meaning.

Surrealism, not as an esthete, but as an investigator and experimenter has extended its research into every field in an attempt to get to the bottom of things. There is no Surrealist art, there are only proposed means—and these proposed means may be only temporary. Surrealism wishes to reconcile what has been up to this irreconcilable, to utilize what has been un-

DECEMBER 9, 1936 VOL. 4, Nos. 2-3

The Bulletin

Published by
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street, New York

Trustees

A. Conger Goodyear, <i>President</i>	Edsel B. Ford Philip Goodwin
Nelson A. Rockefeller, <i>1st Vice-President</i>	Mrs. Charles S. Payson Mrs. Stanley Resor
Mrs. John S. Sheppard, <i>2nd Vice-President</i>	Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.
Samuel A. Lewisohn, <i>Treasurer</i>	Beardsley Ruml Paul J. Sachs
Cornelius N. Bliss	Edward M. M. Warburg
Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss	John Hay Whitney
Stephen C. Clark	Honorary Trustees
Mrs. W. Murray Crane	Frederic Clay Bartlett
The Lord Duveen of Millbank	Frank Crowninshield Duncan Phillips
Marshall Field	Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Director*

Thomas Dabney Mabry, Jr., *Executive Director*

The bulletin is a membership privilege.

reasonably despised. Man is surrounded by invisible forces—they must be captured. To plumb the mystery of man too many roads have been neglected. Man is what he has been made. It is important to reveal to him that which hides him from himself. With Surrealism all poetic and pictorial manifestations are situated on the level of life and life on the level of dreams. In the night in which we live, in the carefully preserved obscurity which prevents man from rebelling, a beam from a lighthouse sweeps in a circular path over the human and extra-human horizon: it is the light of Surrealism.

